





### A shared commitment to ageing better

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) working to be an Age-Friendly city region, they established an Ageing Hub to respond to opportunities and challenges of the ageing population in the city region, focusing on reducing inequalities and ageing well
- GMCA's Local Industrial Strategy included a commitment to reducing the gap in economic activity rate for people aged 50-Spa
- 2016 GMCA signed a five-year partnership with the Centre for Ageing Better to develop and share innovative approaches to tackling social, economic and health inequalities in later life
- 2017 Budget commitment for GMCA to work alongside Government via DWP/JCP to explore opportunities to improve employment support for older people, including consideration of a locally tailored offer targeted at over 50s
- 2018 Steering Group committed to a project aimed at producing a replicable, evidencebased model/s of back-to-work support for those aged 50-SPa



### **First steps**

Rapid Evidence Review commissioned by AB, in collaboration with DWP and GMCA, to explore 'what works' in providing place-based employment and skills support for over 50s. Key findings included:

- Need for enhanced evaluation of existing provision a lack of evidence as to what works for over 50s
- Support for co-designing and piloting a new model of employment and skills support for over 50s
- Need to target over 50s within existing / pipeline programmes within GMCA

Partnership agreed on a joint project to look at opportunities for a new way to support people and to understand what 18-month for economically inactive people in their 50s and 60s.

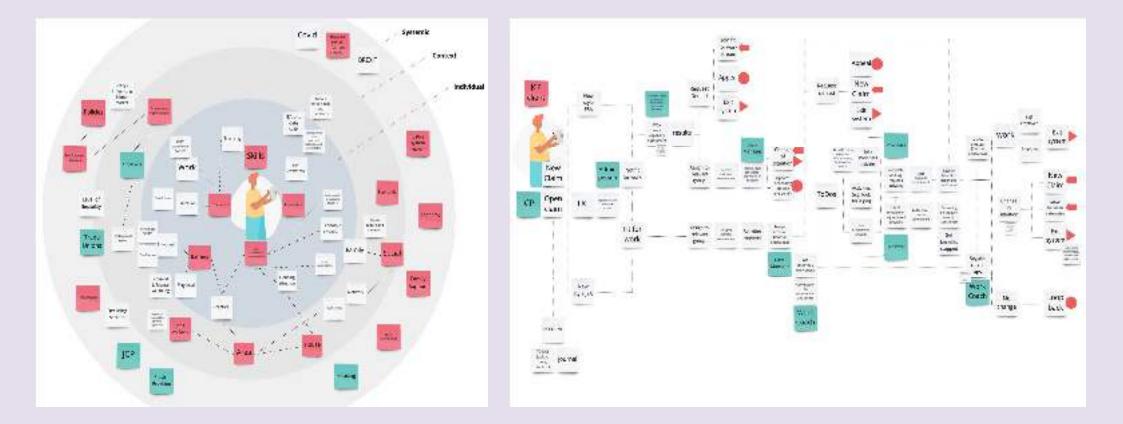
In 2020, AB commissioned design organisation Humanly to lead an 18-month co-design process.

**Centre for Ageing Better** 



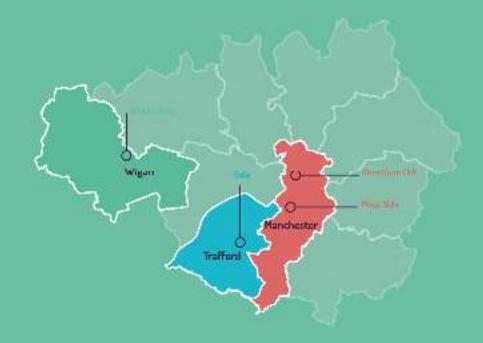
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# Mapping the system





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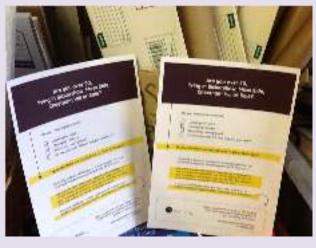


- Co-creation activities across target areas/populations ensuring diversity of ethnicity, age, socio-economic profiles, levels of unemployment or economic inactivity, transport links, links to industry, and experience of long-term ill health or disability.
  - Activity revealed key themes, which were then used in a further stage of cocreation to develop ideas for solutions. Following a collaborative process of concept refinement and feedback, four concepts were taken into the prototyping phase. These were prototyped at a range of fidelities to test their desirability, viability and feasibility.

### **Recruitment of people with lived experience**

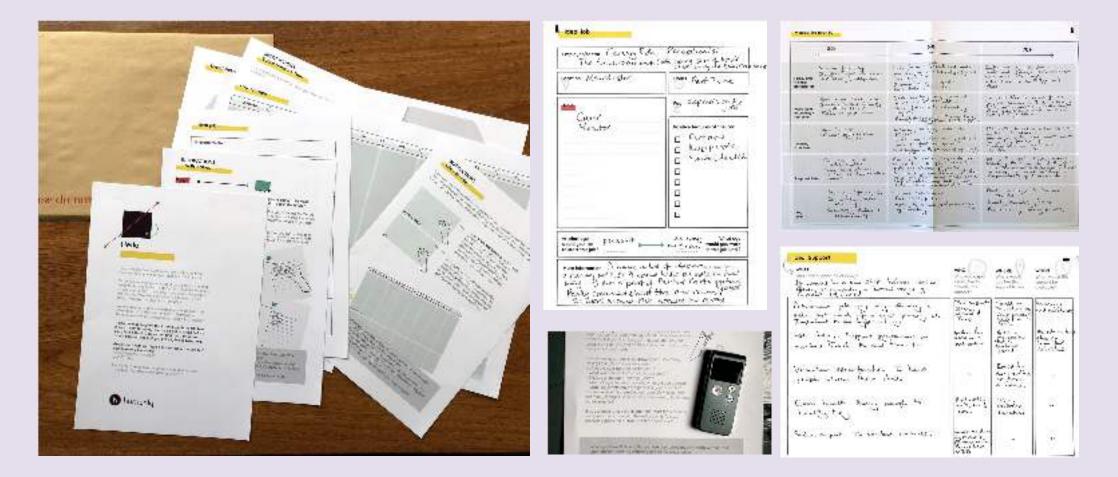




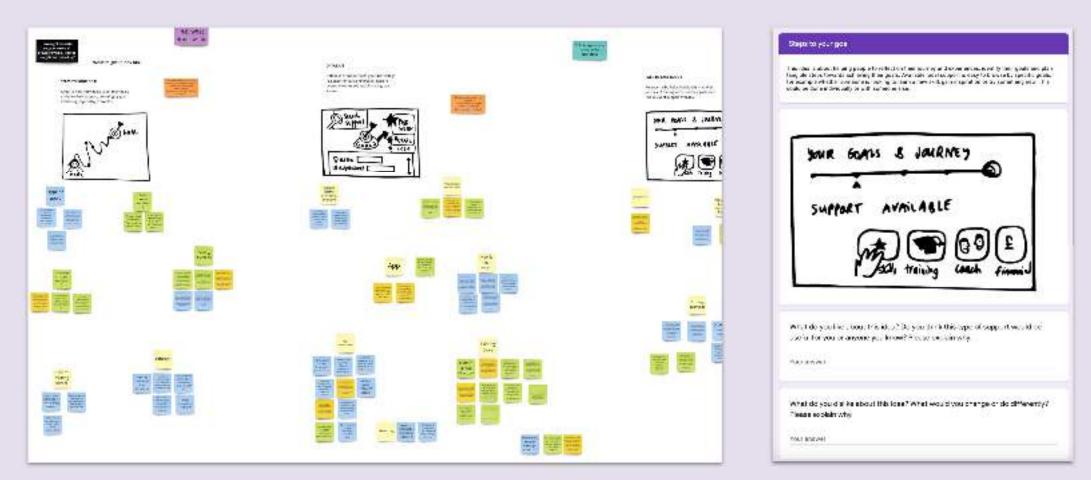




### **Co-creation activities**



### **Concept development**



# Key insights

# People are worried about...

Accessing support CV gaps Need to upskill Work culture Practical barriers Employer perception Placing demands on employers Disclosing health issues People want support that is..

Positive Person focused Practical Clearly explained Aspiration focused Links to employers Flexible Involves them Support needs to focus more on...

Confidence Skills linked to work Addressing isolation Progression Speaking about age positively Wider life circumstance Commissioners can support by...

Removing eligibility criteria Focusing on outreach and voluntary engagement Involving a range of partners Support delivered in trusted spaces – removing the link to benefits Making a clear offer to over 50s

## Bringing people on the journey

#### Things that helped:

- Established a smaller design working group with individuals from Ageing Better, GMCA and DWP to help shape the project
- Appointed a project manager that sat within both Ageing Better and GMCA
- Quarterly steering groups
- Smaller design-focused group
- Evaluation working group
- Newsletters, blogs
- Presentations on the service design process
- Established a learning network of other CAs and local councils
- Shared insights nationally via AB employment taskforce

These lead to supportive engagement from stakeholders; successful recruitment of stakeholders with lived experience; emerging ideas being incorporated into existing programmes or potential new provision



# What it became: Support to Succeed

Identifying, engaging and supporting economically inactive residents with complex needs to address barriers and achieve positive onwards destinations Insights from the work supported development of the dedicated

50+ offer

#### **Delivery Partners:**

The Growth Company (lead organisation) 7 Supply Chain Partners 5 Specialist Providers: Sow the City, The Money Charity, EFL Trust, The Lab Project and Pathways CIC Covering 10 GM Local Authority areas

#### **Key Details:**

STS service is part of the GM Working Well suite of

employment programmes

Contract duration from October 31, 2023, to March 31, 2025 (now extended)

Aim to support a minimum of 5,202 people, including 1,000 aged 50+

These targets have been met and exceeded



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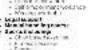
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vice galaxy there having appeal to associat for people aged 500, and existing reliable as hepgen point. and representative of this strongs while the participants over 50, key werkers are available that are 50° theraselves or have experience working with people of this age group. Peer support groups are also available through and the informations where provide in course pargin agest \$25 rars suggers tools after cold share their e-perforces.

### What next: Health Foundation Impact Project

Mobilise a whole system approach to addressing increasing levels of economic inactivity (EI) resulting from poor health amongst those aged 50-64 across Greater Manchester (GM).

- Exploratory research with diverse stakeholders.
- Key Insights mental health/shame, fragmented working lives leading to poverty, no pension, not accessing benefits, no data.
- Regardless of the community, all have many common issues.
- Analysis of commissioned programmes data.
- **Key Insights** Partnership vital for community engagement, low intrinsic motivation, lack of self confidence, low digital skills, MSK common, more myth busting needed.
- Reinforces existing evidence.

AIM

- Quantitative data analysis applies to GM.
- **Key Insights** -Increasing levels of economic inactivity for 50+ within GM over last 10 years (continuation expected). Gender disparities are less obvious among long term sick. 50-64-year-olds make up almost 50% of all ill-health claimants. Identify 'hotspot' areas for Out Of Work claimants in GM.
- Identify target group/s across GM (not homogenous).



Funded by UK Government





# **Next Steps & Opportunities**

### Operational

Utilise outcomes from WorkWell & Support to Succeed – learn from each other and apply to other existing programme design and delivery.

Biscussion and agreement with core group to develop evaluation framework to assess impact.

### Strategic

- 💏 🛛 Get Britain Working plan over 50s HF Impact Project will feed into GM version.
- Data, insight and best practice can inform work of Joint Inclusive Employment Unit (NHS/ DWP/ GMCA) support for over 50s through various targeted initiatives.

#### HF Impact Project used as evidence base and model for further commissioning.

### WORKING WELL DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY FOR GREATER MANCHESTER

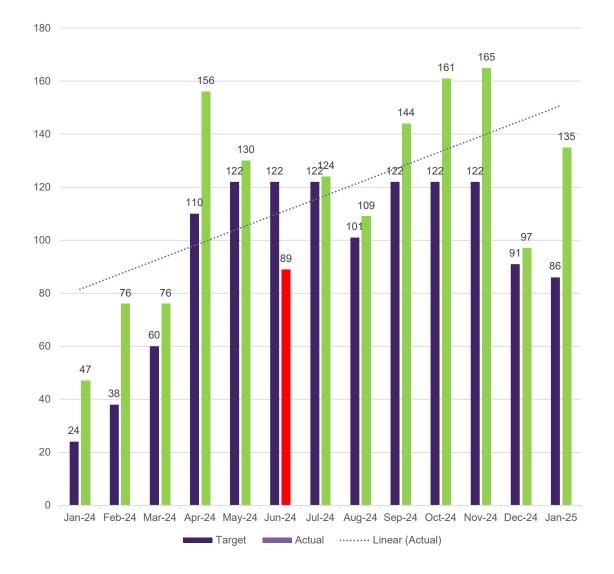
## **Performance** by Month (Over 50s)

#### Starts

In January 2025, there were 135 50+ starts on programme

To date, 1509 50+ individuals have started on programme against a target of 1156 (131%).

All months exceeded target excluding June





### You have taken me from a place of utter darkness and despair and shone a light on every possibility of success and recovery

WORKING WELL DDING THINDS EMPERATIVY FOR OREATER MANCHESTER

Feedback from Anna, a Support to Succeed participant to her keyworker:

"I first spoke with you last year when you called me following a referral. Little did I realise at that time just how integral you were to become as part of my healing journey. You listened to me, you understood and picked me up where I was. You stuck to your word and contacted me every week and this may seem such a small part and perhaps even a "routine" part of your role, but it was certainly a huge thing to me. Your integrity was undoubtedly received with trust and rapport.

Your words always seem to resonate with me, and I get something out of every call and meeting that we have.

You have taken me from a place of utter darkness and despair and shone a light on every possibility of success and recovery. I put my trust in you, and it has certainly paid off. You have guided me week by week with compassion and empathy and never once made me feel like I was failing, even when I felt I was. You reminded me of all the achievements and small wins I had created and became a beacon of hope and inspiration.

You went above and beyond your call of duty every time.

I now sit here writing this, realising how deficient words actually are. But I guess the proof is in the pudding. I'm smiling, my heart full of joy and more importantly I see a future for me and my boys.

It's been a journey I could never have done alone, and you were the piece that made all the difference. You're an integral part of my journey and a wonderful human being I will certainly always remember fondly.

Thank you for all you have done, although please understand that these words just don't do it justice.

I will continue to keep moving forward, not just for me and the boys but for all your input and hard work from you. It's testament to your dedication you've shown to me. With all the love in my heart, thank you. For everything. Small words for such a wonderful person."

Andy joined Support to Succeed as he is retired but wants to continue learning and developing new skills.

Since joining the programme, Andy has been interested in trying new activities that match his interests and help keep a routine to improve his wellbeing. He is especially interested in activities related to nature and sustainability.

Andy was interested in learning sewing skills to repurpose and upcycle clothing. Through the Support to Succeed programme, he attended a sewing session with Groundwork where he learnt basic skills and stitching techniques. He also took in some of his old jeans and belts and fixed them.

Andy enjoyed learning new skills and is looking forward to attending future sessions to keep developing his sewing ability.





#### Supporting Stephen to re-engage with his passions

Stephen is a military veteran who, since leaving in 1998, had been self-employed running the catering side of a pub. Stephen's business ended during Covid, which had a major impact on his mental health.

As a qualified chef, Stephen holds multiple qualifications which he completed in order to reduce his social isolation.

Stephen joined the Support to Succeed programme as he was seeking support with his motivation and confidence and wanted positive activities to leave the house for. He also wanted to volunteer, potentially showing others how to cook.

Through the programme, Stephen has been working on a one-to-one basis with his Key Worker to build his confidence and overcome barriers to engagement.

Stephen is now engaged with the Veterans Café in Ashton and, due to his increased confidence, is leading on the cooking sessions for Support to Succeed.

#### Providing Denise with reassurance for the future

Heading into retirement, Denise was concerned about her future and finances, particularly her state pension entitlement and the increase in the cost-of-living.

Since becoming partially sighted, Denise has been unable to work and is in receipt of disability benefits. A referral from her caseworker to the Working Well: Finance, Benefits and Debt team was the first step to finding peace of mind.

After carrying out a full financial and pension review, Denise's advisor set-up a Government Gateway Login which enabled her to access her state pension details. Fortunately, Denise had worked for long enough, with sufficient disability contributions, to be entitled to the full state pension which she was very grateful to hear.

A discussion about Denise's previous employment history, including 10 years at a bakery, established that she may have access to an additional pension. She had also worked at Wilko for five years which potentially meant another pension, protected despite the company being in administration.

Denise's advisor also spoke to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on her behalf to confirm she was in receipt of her full benefits entitlement and discovered they would be increasing slightly next year.

As she nears retirement, having clarity about her pension and benefits has given Denise confidence and reassurance about her future.



#### WORKING WELL DDING THINGS DIFFERENT LY FOR ORBATER HANGRESTER

#### Supporting Oi Le to find her voice

Oi Le joined the Support to Succeed (STS) programme after moving to the UK as part of the Hong Kong UK Welcome Programme.

Despite having 35 years' experience working in administration in the transport and logistics sector, Oi Le was having difficulty finding a suitable role in the UK.

Although her English was of a good standard, Oi Le lacked confidence and was keen to find ways to improve her communication skills.

Her key worker spent time getting to know Oi Le, and with opportunities to make mistakes in a supportive environment, her spoken English improved dramatically.

An informal interview for an Administrative Coordinator role resulted in positive feedback which was a real boost for Oi Le's confidence.

With ongoing support from her key worker, Oi Le is now looking at receptionist roles so she can combine her English language skills with her administrative expertise.

Tessa joined the Support to Succeed programme as she was unemployed, financially dependent on her husband, and lacked a support network. She was also feeling isolated, suffering from anxiety and depression, and experiencing low self-esteem. Through Support to Succeed, Tessa attended a puppy yoga class in March which helped her meet new people and uplifted her mood. This class also enabled Tessa to connect with people facing similar challenges and was crucial in building her confidence and willingness to engage further.

Following the puppy yoga class, Tessa attended a "Prepare to Change" workshop in April undertaking guided meditation, which had a transformative impact on her wellbeing, stress management, and personal growth journey. By embracing mindfulness practices, Tessa emerged from the workshop with renewed clarity, resilience, and empowerment.

Another barrier Tessa faced was her lack of digital skills as this hindered her ability to manage her emails, access online services and resources, and find employment. Tessa also didn't have a laptop so the Support to Succeed team provided her with a laptop. After attending an IT course in May, Tessa was able to practice the digital skills she learnt on her own



#### Supporting Yetti into a new role

Yetti, joined the Support to Succeed programme after visiting the Bury Works Hub and chatting with the team. Alongside being out of work for 5 months, Yetti felt like her age and lack of IT skills were barriers to employment.

Yetti, worked with the Support to Succeed team to build up her IT skills including learning how to attach documents to emails and access her Universal Credit journal online.

After sending her CV to the Support to Succeed team, Yetti met with a member of Bury Adult Educations Services. They let her know there was a part-time cleaning/caretaking role at the Council that she was able to go for. Yetti was supported in getting the necessary documents ready for this role and is now waiting to receive her DBS back before starting the role.

Alongside this, Yetti will also be meeting with the finance team to receive advice on outstanding Council Tax payments.

The support Yetti, received has improved her IT abilities and helped her find part-time employment which she is looking forward to starting. Paul joined the Support to Succeed programme after being unemployed for over a year.

Paul had experience working in the building trade but needed support to develop his IT and employability skills to improve his job search capabilities. He also had no experience with Microsoft Office which was essential for many roles he was interested in.

After receiving training, Paul has gained significant confidence and proficiency in IT. He is now able to create and format documents, use Excel for budgeting, and develop presentations in PowerPoint. This new skill set has opened up more job opportunities for him.

Paul has also improved his job searching abilities. He is actively applying for jobs online, has created a strong CV, and feels more prepared for interviews. His improved IT skills and confidence have made him more competitive in the job market.



Supporting Stephen back into employment

Stephen wanted to regain employment but lacked the confidence and knowledge to do this. He joined the Support to Succeed programme to access support to help him re-enter the workplace.

Stephen completed his City & Guilds Level 1 Health and Safety in the Construction Environment and is currently completing his FLT training to develop his employability. He is also working with his keyworker to send his CV out to employers.

Moreover, Stephen was recently referred to Working Wardrobe by his keyworker and received a full interview outfit. This boosted his confidence about approaching employers and attending prospective interviews now he is actively job searching.

#### Supporting Irene to reduce her social isolation

After being a midwife for 40 years on NATO barracks in Germany, Irene was made redundant in 2020 and returned to the UK a few weeks before COVID lockdown. With limited opportunities to meet new people, Irene felt lost and isolated.

Irene joined Support to Succeed earlier this year as she felt stuck. Her midwifery registration had expired, she felt out of touch with IT skills, and she believed her age was a significant barrier to finding future employment or rebuilding her social connections.

After joining the programme, Irene began volunteering at the STS community garden where she made new friends, gained confidence, and reduced her social isolation.

Additionally, Irene received a laptop and worked with her keyworker to gain IT support, job-searching skills, and update her CV to expand her job-searching capabilities. Irene secured a job interview at a local community food bank and received support with interview skills and interview clothing.

Irene was successful and found the role perfectly aligned with her passion for helping people. However, the role required a certain level of fitness due to the lifting involved, and Irene felt she would benefit from strength-based exercise classes. STS funded a gym membership to help her explore this option.

Irene continues to enjoy her new role, while STS continue to support Irene with advice on workplace issues or HR concerns, ensuring she feels guided every step of the way.

Irene commented: "The support I have received has gone far beyond simply searching for employment in the UK job market. The gym membership helped me regain energy, the community garden provided a sense of belonging and the IT skills helped me tackle tasks I once found intimidating"

Irene is an inspiration to anyone who feels that age or circumstances are barriers to a fresh start.

She added "I thought I was too old and too out of touch to start again, but STS showed me that wasn't true. I have been given the tools, the confidence, and the belief that I could do this."









### Supporting Kevin to build his confidence through new experiences

Kevin joined the Support to Succeed programme as he lacked confidence and self-esteem following negative experiences in the workplace. He had been out of work for around 18 months and was in receipt of universal credit.

After joining the programme, Kevin attended several workshops and visited the job club. With previous experience working in technology, he was looking to find relevant work experience. Despite having lots of strengths, Kevin was lacking confidence due to disabilities, which impacted his self-belief.

With support from his keyworker, Kevin found a volunteering role through Salford CVS. This role involved supporting elderly people to use technology whilst having a chat to develop social connections and reduce isolation. After attending the volunteer induction session. Kevin's confidence has improved and he is looking forward to using his existing skills in this new role.



I just wanted to say thank you for the support shown towards me since my very first encounter.

It's been an extraordinary period in my life with struggles of my mental health, which manifested in many ways.

You listened to my fears and listened with compassion and empathy. The loss of my beloved Mum and Pet dog in such a short period along with other unfortunate luck was hard to bear.

You shone through when there seemed to be no hope whatsoever. There was a dark period when you helped me more than words can express when I was. danger to myself and you thankfully stepped in called the services to come and talk to me and calm my soul.

You have a wonderful effect and give a glimmer of hope to me and the future. I hope to get involved more and have enjoyed the events from the open days at your offices. For me personally it means so much to mean I'm not alone in how I feel and there is support out there. I've enjoyed organised walks, meditation classes both one on one and as a group to help me and my thoughts and feelings.

In one week alone you showed me medication and the art of humming a tune to deter thoughts of sadness etc.

I want to close by saying I hope to do more classes etc. Your team and colleagues are always so kind and make me feel so welcome at the offices. It's a safe place for me to talk and look and options open to me to move forward and get well.

Long may you and your colleagues and the efforts in the community continue you were a lifeline when I had nowhere to turn.

# Stories of Women, Work and Uncertain Futures

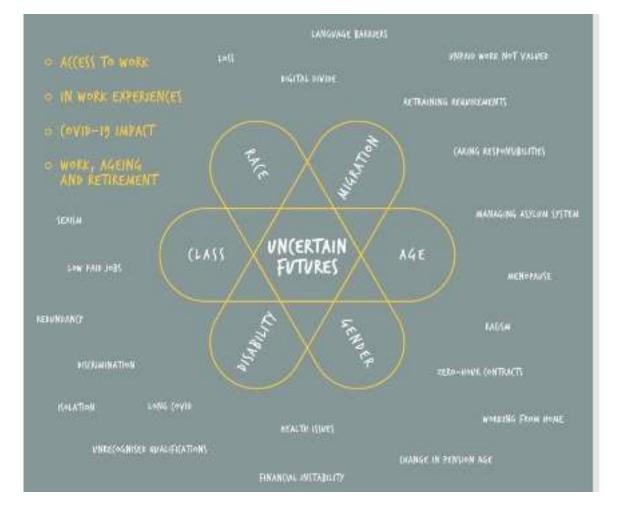


An immense collaborative work combining art, research and activism that has spanned five years.

Created by an Advisory Group of women from Manchester's diverse communities with the US artist Suzanne Lacy, a pioneer of social practice art and community organising, it aims to create civic change and affect social policy.

Initiated in 2019, the project has explored intersectional issues on paid and unpaid work through the lens of women over 50, focusing on gender, age, race, disability, and class.

Elayne Redford, Work & Skills Specialist Manchester City Council



#### Uncertain Futures 2019 - 2024

Led by artist Suzanne Lacy with Ruth Edson, Learning Manager: Communities, Manchester Art Gallery.

Researchers are Dr Sarah Campbell, Manchester Metropolitan University and Dr Elaine Dewhurst, University of Manchester.

#### Manchester City Council, Work & Skills

An Advisory Group made up of 14 women, all leaders and activists in their communities.

Uncertain Futures has been funded by Manchester City Council, Arts Council England, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Manchester, Awards for All Community Fund and, University of Southern California

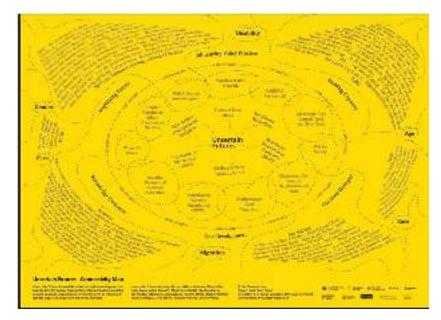
## Research & Art

The research question being investigated is: 'What are the experiences of work and worklessness for women over 50 in Manchester in relation to work and retirement?

<u>Suzanne Lacy</u> was commissioned to create a new artwork. In partnership with Manchester Art gallery, they brought together research, community and activist practice through a series of collaborations.

3 installations were opened at the Gallery on Mosley Street, Manchester.

The Advisory Group of 14 women represent an extremely diverse and empowered cross section of the Manchester population and have been participants in every aspect of the project, including the exhibitions as well as the research design, the questions to ask, the recruitment of interviewees, and the analysis of data.



## Research & Art

Weekly meetings were held virtually to develop project goals and codesign the Manchester art gallery installations.

This first installation in June 2021 constituted a "performance of research". -- a room that served as an interview site to confidentially collect the work experiences of 100 women over 50 representing a cross section of Manchester residents.

In September 2022, the second installation opened to provide an indepth review of the structure and process of the project. Inside the room, research methodologies were revealed alongside the anonymised transcripts from 100 interviews.

In March 2024, the third installation opened – *Stories of Women, Work and Uncertain Futures*. This was the concluding exhibition at the Gallery, but future exhibitions are planned in ither countries.



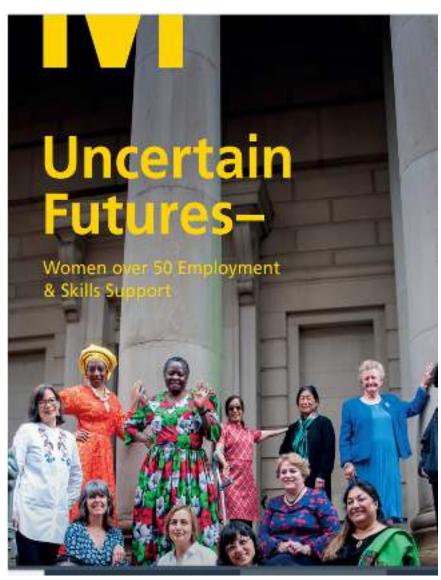
## Activism

In partnership with Manchester City Council's Work and Skills team, seven public sessions explored retraining, rights at work, pensions, confident language, menopause and leadership for women over 50.

'Chai and Chat' gatherings continued for informal and intimate conversations with a wide range of women.

The group also held a policy event aimed at disseminating the research findings to relevant stakeholders. Private meetings were held with relevant city council officials, MPs, government departments and the project was presented to the Government's Science Office.

Further opportunities were afforded through pilot projects funded through the Councils Work & Skills team including employment support projects delivered to South Asian women connecting back to GMCA funded programmes such as Support to Succeed.



### Successes

- An extensive research report, Uncertain Futures: 100 Women, which highlights the key themes and recommendations of our research.
- A short documentary, Uncertain Futures Research Findings. Reporting out on the research in conferences, on panels and in the media continues through the research team, which continues to consult on tool kits and papers.
- A *three-channel film* shown alongside the project manifesto, and research report outlining the research findings.



Published article, *Gerontology, Art and Activism: Can the intersection of art, social research and community power lead to lasting change?* in the prestigious Gerontologist Magazine

The project has been selected as a *case study in the UN's Decade of Healthy Ageing Progress Report 2021-2023* for its important contribution to national progress on healthy ageing.

Award for Promotion of Social Justice and Equality – Manchester Culture Awards 2022

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## + Uncertain Futures: A Manifesto

### The Manifesto declares that "Women over 50 have the right to EQUALITY, GOOD WORK, RECOGNITION OF UNPAID LABOUR and PARTICIPATE FULLY IN DECISION-MAKING"

The manifesto is a distillation of the key findings from the participatory research project, adapted into actions for policy makers, practitioners, researchers, artists and members of the public.

The manifesto has been used to align the project with other relevant campaigns to demonstrate solidarity with other movements fighting for social justice and racial and gender equality.

Under each category is a list of demands, endorsements, national and local actions that hopefully will inspire continuing activism on the issues and findings of the project.

### For much more information, and to download the manifesto and other publications please visit <u>Uncertain Futures</u>

### THANKS FOR LISTENING

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